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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/900,503	07/06/2001	Lawrence W. Hu	GUID012CON	5237

7590 06/19/2002

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EXAMINER

SMITH, JEFFREY A

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

3625

DATE MAILED: 06/19/2002

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	09/900,503	HU ET AL.	
Examiner	Art Unit		
Jeffrey A. Smith	3625		

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on _____.
- 2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.
- 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 1-6,8-15 and 17-25 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) Claim(s) 1-6,14,15,17-20,24 and 25 is/are allowed.
- 6) Claim(s) 8-11 and 21-23 is/are rejected.
- 7) Claim(s) 12 and 13 is/are objected to.
- 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) The drawing(s) filed on 13 March 2002 is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) approved b) disapproved by the Examiner.
If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 - a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
 - a) The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Information Disclosure Statement

The information disclosure statement deposited 28 March 2002 fails to comply with 37 CFR 1.98(a)(2), which requires a legible copy of each U.S. and foreign patent; each publication or that portion which caused it to be listed; and all other information or that portion which caused it to be listed. It has been placed in the application file, but the information referred to therein has not been considered.

Particularly, all non-U.S. Patent citations have not been considered. References of these documents could not be located in the 09/305,811 file and such references are not readily available to the Examiner. All U.S. Patent citations have been considered.

Drawings

The proposed drawing corrections deposited 13 March 2002 have been approved for entry. The formal drawing changes have been approved and entered.

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Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claims 11-13, and 23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

In claim 11, line 5: it appears that "claim" should read as --clamp--.

Indicated Allowability Withdrawn

The indicated allowability of subject matter contained in claims 8-11 is withdrawn in view of the newly discovered references to Looney et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,348,036 B1) and Hancock (U.S. Patent No. 6,331,157 B2). Rejections based on the newly cited references follow.

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Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless -

(e) the invention was described in a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention thereof by the applicant for patent, or on an international application by another who has fulfilled the requirements of paragraphs (1), (2), and (4) of section 371(c) of this title before the invention thereof by the applicant for patent.

The changes made to 35 U.S.C. 102(e) by the American Inventors Protection Act of 1999 (AIPA) do not apply to the examination of this application as the application being examined was not (1) filed on or after November 29, 2000, or (2) voluntarily published under 35 U.S.C. 122(b). Therefore, this application is examined under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) prior to the amendment by the AIPA (pre-AIPA 35 U.S.C. 102(e)).

Claims 8, 10, and 11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Looney et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,348,036 B1).

Looney et al. discloses (Fig. 1) a surgical retractor blade comprising a body (112 and 130: see Fig. 3B), a channel, a curved rail (120c), a plurality of slots (123), and a clamp (124) for holding a suture.

Claims 8-11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Hancock (U.S. Patent No. 6,331,157 B2).

Hancock discloses (Fig. 1) a surgical retractor blade comprising a body (24), a channel, a curved rail (30), a plurality of slots (37).

The rail has a narrowed region which forms tabs (32) on a top portion.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

Claims 21-23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Looney et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,348,036 B1) or Hancock (U.S. Patent No. 6,331,157 B2) in view of Brief (U.S. Patent No. 4,747,395).

Neither Looney et al. or Hancock disclose that the body comprises a polymer.

Brief, in a similar blade (col. 1, lines 4-7), discloses the use of polymeric material. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to have provided the body of either Looney et al. or Hancock to have comprised a polymeric material because of its known chemical inertness, compatibility with cell metabolism and ability to withstand repeated sterilizations (col. 2, lines 48-57).

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 1-6, 14, 15, 16-20, 24, and 25 are allowable over the prior art of record.

Claims 12 and 13 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 8-11, and 21-23 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Jeffrey A. Smith whose telephone number is 703-308-3588. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 6:30am-6:00pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Wynn Coggins can be reached on 703-308-1344. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned

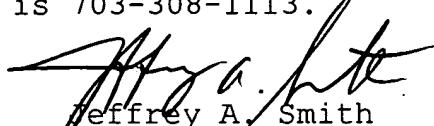
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are 703-305-7687 for regular communications and 703-308-3691 for
After Final communications.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status
of this application or proceeding should be directed to the
receptionist whose telephone number is 703-308-1113.



Jeffrey A. Smith
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 3625

jas
June 17, 2002